

**Senator Hébert:** People remember that.

**Senator Thériault:** This time, I am quoting from a letter that Senator Simard wrote to Ms Tracy Sletto, External Vice-President, Saskatchewan Students' Union, Room 65, Place Riel Campus Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The letter reads as follows:

Dear Ms Sletto:

Thank you for your recent letter expressing concern for the provision of Bill C-76 which would eliminate the six-month interest free period on student loans.

I share your concern and I have expressed my intention to seek a modification to this bill which would maintain the six-month interest free period. For your information, I am including a transcript of the remarks I made at the Senate National Finance Committee on March 4th 1993.

Honourable senators, I was not at that meeting and I did not read the report, but the students tell me that they left that committee meeting with the full understanding that Senator Simard was supporting them.

• (1600)

The letter goes on to state:

I trust this information will please you and am quite confident that we will be successful in our endeavour.

Their "endeavour", honourable senators, was to delete that section in the bill. Those students will be responsible, work or no work, job or no job, revenue or no revenue, for the first six months of interest after they are finished their studies.

I wish to tell Senator Simard that the impression I got from the University of Moncton students was that he was on their side. The federation thought he was on their side. Today, he rises and, using the mere excuse of what has happened in New Brunswick — which, in fact, would reinforce his position — he opposes this bill; he does an about-face and supports his party when it is hurting the students of my province and his.

**Senator Simard:** Honourable senators, obviously Senator Thériault has not heard. I wish to ask a question of Senator Thériault.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Resign, resign!

**Senator Murray:** Question.

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I will not retrace all the steps that we have gone through in this debate, but I do wish to make a few comments. What is going on is an exact example of the futility that we are engaged in in this house. It is absolute futility. The student federation appeared before us

in committee. Senator Kinsella and Senator Simard agreed with them. They made a very fine presentation, an excellent presentation. What they were saying was sensible; it was correct, and those senators agreed with it. We have presented amendments to achieve what they had agreed with, but what will happen today? Those senators will vote en bloc with the government.

I ask you, my honourable friends, are we achieving what we are supposed to achieve in the Senate when we do that? Surely it is not the purpose of this institution to stand up as a bloc and support, in the case of senators opposite, what the government wants, and in our case what the opposition wants. That is not the objective of the Senate. If we persist on that route, quite frankly, we ought to abolish the place because it is not serving a useful purpose in our Canadian system. It is simply not doing what it ought to do. We should be looking at legislation in the light of what that legislation means for Canadians, not what it means for our parties.

The first amendment that we proposed yesterday was a broader one dealing with more of the elements with respect to students. It was turned down. We are now proposing a much more modest one — in fact, a very modest one.

I remember Senator Kinsella stating that we should not make changes until such times as a program evaluation had been carried out. I agree. Then why should we propose now to make these changes? Let us consider what this chamber is all about. It is not here to be a rubber stamp for the House of Commons, for the cabinet, for the bureaucracy. It is here to give serious, sober second thought to what is being done.

Senator Simard and Senator Kinsella agreed with the students in the committee, and they were correct. I urge honourable senators now to throw off the shackles of the party and let us vote for what is good for Canadians.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion in amendment moved by the Honourable Senator Corbin, seconded by the Honourable Senator Lewis, that Bill C-76 be amended by deleting clauses 3 and 4 at pages 1, 2 and 3?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yes.

**Some Hon. Senators:** No.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Will those honourable senators in favour of the motion in amendment please say "yea"?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Yea.

**The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore:** Will those honourable senators opposed to the motion in amendment please say "nay"?

**Some Hon. Senators:** Nay.